

NEWS from



Bill Postmus

Supervisor, 1st District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 13, 2001

Contact: Brad Mitzelfelt
(909) 387-4830

Postmus Announces Million-Dollar Economic Development Program County to Focus on Business and Job Growth

VICTORVILLE—San Bernardino County Supervisor Bill Postmus today announced a million-dollar economic development effort for his First Supervisorial District. Postmus said the program will concentrate on assisting existing businesses, industries and employers in retaining jobs in the High Desert and Morongo Valley, as well as helping local Cities to attract new employers to the region.

“This million-dollar economic development program is one of the ways I’m keeping my campaign promise to increase the County’s economic development efforts in the First District,” said Postmus, who was sworn-in as a newly elected Supervisor in December.

The plan has three primary objectives:

1. To improve the quality of life and economy in the High Desert through greater work opportunities by facilitating the creation and retention of more and higher paying jobs;
2. To support local business development and growth by helping them remain competitive in today's market place; and
3. To provide resources for marketing and promotional activities which encourage interest and investment in the First District.

‘One-Stop’ Business Center

A key component of the new plan is the formation of the County’s first ever ‘One-Stop’ Business Center. The Center will be a pilot project located in the First District, and will be equipped with the technology required to provide services to local or potential employers.

-MORE-

ECONOMIC PROGRAM

PAGE 2

The One-Stop Business Center will be staffed by several County departments within the Economic Development/Public Services Group (ED/PSG), including the Economic and Community Development Department (ECD), the Jobs and Employment Services Department (JESD), and the Land Use Services Department (LUSD).

ED/PSG will supply staffing for First District regional marketing and promotional activities and assist Cities with business attraction efforts, if desired. The Group can provide international trade development assistance, and will expand the County's High-Technology promotional efforts in the First District. The Group will also provide an economic development liaison who will, among other duties, keep the lines of communication open among the Cities and the County, Postmus said.

ECD personnel can provide several specialized services including: project financing, loan packaging assistance, gap-financing and loan guarantee services, assisting businesses in locating procurement opportunities, and providing economic and demographic information. Programs include Small Business Administration (SBA) and Community Development Block Grant (CDGB) business lending, industrial revenue bond assistance, state tax incentives, and site location assistance. ECD can also assist jurisdictions in applying for federal and state assistance.

JESD personnel can, for example, assist local businesses with labor and training needs including the development of special training programs for employers, and provide funding for re-training services to displaced workers and for on-the-job training programs.

LUSD personnel will be responsible for responding to planning issues in areas of current or future development, and will coordinate land-use plans with other regulatory agencies. LUSD can assist in expediting the local, State and Federal permitting processes.

Economic Development Task Force

The second key component of the economic development program is the creation of a First District Economic Development Task Force that will guide and coordinate the regional effort. Postmus said he will invite economic development professionals from each of the First District's seven incorporated cities (Adelanto, Apple Valley, Barstow, Hesperia, Needles, Twentynine Palms and Victorville) to participate in the Task Force.

"I'm very pleased that this is a district-wide endeavor," Postmus said. "By including all the communities in my District, including Needles, Twentynine Palms and the unincorporated communities, this is truly going to be a regional effort." Postmus added that the initial structure of the Task Force may be tailored to fit the specific needs of the region in the future. The Task Force structure is similar to task forces currently operating in the East and West Inland Valleys of the County.

-MORE-

ECONOMIC PROGRAM
PAGE 3

'Unprecedented Investment'

The program's \$1 million estimated budget represents an unprecedented investment in economic development promotion in the First District, Postmus said. The funds will cover the following program components for the first year:

<u>Task/Resource</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Job Developers	JESD	\$ 200,000
Business Developers	ECD	\$ 200,000
Liaison	ED/PSG	\$ 50,000
Land Use	LUSD	\$ 50,000
Training Services	JESD	\$ 250,000
Marketing Funds	1 st District	\$ 150,000
Business Development	ECD	\$ 100,000
TOTAL		\$1,000,000

Inland Empire Economic Partnership (IEEP)

Another important part of the new program will be the IEEP. "We plan to intensify the services of the Inland Empire Economic Partnership, particularly its Small Business Development Center, in the First District," Postmus said.

IEEP is a large economic development organization operating in both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. The County, which is already a member of IEEP, and possibly some of the desert cities, will rely upon the organization to receive "leads" from the California Trade and Commerce Agency and to continue placement of advertisements in national "locator" publications, conventions and regional promotional materials. These were until recently functions of REDA.

With the impending dissolution of REDA, the new emphasis on IEEP could not have come at a better time, Postmus said. "I'm going to make sure that in the wake of REDA, we don't lose any ground in our economic development efforts," he said. "We have a lot of work to do, and many areas have received little or no attention for a long time."

-END-